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EDITORIAL

Apostolic Christianity had one great obsession: that the Second Coming of Christ was imminent. As the weeks sped by the Christian leaders, notably John and Paul, tried to explain the delay by saying that Christ could not come until this malign monster, Anti-Christ, personifying every force antagonistic to Christ, was completely vanquished.

The idea has a strange appeal for us, it is so tidy. There is just one enemy to overthrow before the Day of Jubilee breaks upon us. Today, perhaps, there are only a few of us who are waiting for the Second Coming of Christ; but a great many of us are waiting, hoping, longing, praying for the coming of another figure, more secular but still terribly important—the Ideal American Citizen. Election year accentuates the hope. Here is America, great, rich, and powerful; in a position to exert supreme influence upon the whole world. But America is completely dependent upon the quality of her citizens, for in her theory and structure she is almost a pure democracy. No power on earth can move her one way or another, for good or ill, except her own citizens. If ever a nation was in need of a noble concept and a lofty standard of citizenship it is America. The Ideal American Citizen; How long, O Lord, how long? When will he come?

This ideal is high; but if it is unattainable then the sooner we discard our theory of "Government of the people, by the people, and for the people," the better for us. The only way to fulfill the ideal is to identify our Anti-Christ, this personification of all the forces antagonistic to the ideal, get hold of him, bind him hand and foot, hang a millstone 'round his neck and throw him into the sea. This task is complicated by his slipperiness, his ability to change his form, like Proteus. We shall need a modern Hercules to attempt such a labor.

The single force which best deserves the title Anti-Christ is self-interest. This antagonist takes so many shapes that if we could dispose of him we would be just about rid of our Anti-Christ. He takes the form of indolence with millions of our citizens. "I have the right to vote, but am under no compulsion." So very few of our presidents have attracted to the polls more than 60% of our voters. With many he takes the form of indifference. "So long as I am governed enough to be secure in my personal rights and prerogatives, I care not the snap of my finger which party or which candidate takes power." With some, too many for comfort, self-interest takes the form of a petty parochialism. "The rest of the country must look out for itself. My vote goes to the candidate whose election will best benefit my region, my business, my home." And we have to admit that there are those whose self-interest takes the form of simple unblushing predaciousness. "I care nothing for America; less than nothing for the rest of the world. America is mine oyster which I with sword shall ope. My vote goes to the party, person, or policy which bids fair to render this fat juicy oyster most vulnerable to my unscrupulous devices."

This Anti-Christ must be eliminated. There may be more ways than one, but there is that one: popular disrepute. If the millions of approximations to ideal citizenship, the voters whose solicitudes cover the whole country and the whole world, who are as intelligent, informed, just, generous, magnanimous, and far-sighted in their voting as they find it possible to be should make it an unanimous practice to treat every manifestation of Anti-Christ with scorn, make him feel that he has forfeited public favor, and put him in that spot which is more dreaded in America than in any other country, and which we call "the Dog House," something might be done to raise the standard of American citizenship. Laugh if you must; but the foundation of our country is the moral and spiritual reliability of the Ultimate Citizen. Unless we find a way to keep that foundation in good repair there will be no occasion to laugh at all.

C. E. P.

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THE GREATNESS OF JESUS

Alfred Stiernotte

Emerson wrote that the whole of Western history is ploughed with the name of Jesus, meaning that Jesus was such a great personality that the impact of his life on history is manifest in a thousand ways. Theologians have attempted to formulate elaborate doctrines about the real nature of Jesus and, by doing so, have sometimes smothered the historical Jesus. Painters and artists have been inspired to dedicate their works of art to him, or to recall some dramatic episode in his life. Numerous books have been written about him from the one by Bruce Barton, the American business man, to the one by Henri Barbusse, the French radical.

Moreover, creative spirits in all ages have added their own understandings to the character of Jesus. As he comes down to us through the centuries Jesus is really a complex, composite figure, made up of many layers of belief, each added by some thinker, philosopher, theologian, or social reformer. The result is this complex portrait which has come down to this century.

This being so, it is difficult to recover the historical Jesus, what manner of man he was, what his ideas and ideals were. Some steps have been taken, and it is possible to give some indication of those features which make up his greatness.

Much study has been given by Christian and Jewish scholars to the person and teachings of Jesus, one of the most brilliant of which is "Jesus of Nazareth, his Life, Times, and Teachings," by Dr. Joseph Klausner of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. In this work Dr. Klausner makes the statement, which all careful readers of the Bible know to be correct, that every saying of Jesus can be found in some book of the Old Testament. Jesus was a man of the Jewish people and shared the ethical and national ideals of his nation. But Rabbi Klausner admits that the originality of Jesus is revealed by the fact that all the ethical teachings of the prophets were gathered into one life, which was lived with an intensity and directness never before achieved.

Jesus, then, belongs in the category of the prophets, though his chief characteristic is that he is a man of such surpassing dimensions that he does not fit in any one category. He does mention God in his teachings, but he is not a theologian or a philosopher; he speaks about the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, with their beauty surpassing the glory of Solomon, yet he is not merely a poet; he speaks about bringing not peace but a sword, yet he was not exactly a revolutionary; he does acts of healing, yet he is not primarily a miracle-monger or a worker in magic to materialize what is supposed to be immaterial.

Here then is our chief difficulty in the attempt to grasp the historical Jesus: we meet a personality who defies classification, a man with different aspects of greatness. It is because of the intermingling of these different aspects that Jesus became such a tremendous figure, and has had such an impact on the lives of men everywhere.

When a man is great in one direction he makes an impression on his age and attracts a following. But when a man is great in many directions then the impression is so surpassing that it is difficult for anyone to assess him truly, to appraise, in all its beauty and mystery, his many-sided greatness. And the impact of such a man is tremendous.

Rabbi Klausner has emphasized this fact in the case of Jesus:

> "Like every great man, Jesus was a complex of many and amazing contradictions. It was these which compelled astonishment, enthusiasm, and admiration."

In the first place, Jesus was humble and lowly-minded. He came not to rule but to serve. "He that would be great among you, let him be servant of all." He could say that the foxes have holes and the birds have nests, but the Son of man had nowhere to lay his head. When someone said to him: "Good Master," he declined the title: "Only one is good," which clearly indicates that Jesus did not think of himself as God. He was a man of the people, mingling with sinners, tax-gatherers and common people. Thus he scandalized the scribes and Pharisees who were the learned and kept away from the poor people. When Jesus met some distressed person in great sorrow, or in the act of some wrong-doing, he was always ready to forgive: "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone."

And yet Jesus could be very exacting in his ethical ideals, and this gives us a new dimension to his character: he is tender-hearted and forgiving to the last degree, yet he can make demands on people which are nothing less than devasting. "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father in Heaven is perfect. Whosoever shall cause one of these little ones to stumble, it were better that a great mill-stone were hanged about

his neck and he were cast into the sea. If thy hand, or thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off and cast it from thee."

These are what we like to call hyperbolic statements. They indicate the intensity of Jesus in making ethical demands on people. And we know how crushing his denunciations could be: "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites."

For all his lowliness he was surprisingly learned in the lore of the Scribes and Pharisees, or what was called "the Law and the Prophets." After an argument with him they did not dare to ask him any more questions. This is the picture of Jesus which has been recovered in our days. As he is represented in the stained glass windows of our churches he seems unreal to us. The idea of Jesus as "meek and mild" is certainly not true to our records. Renan's description of him, written in 1863, is frankly nauseating to us. "His lovely character created around him a circle of fascination. Tenderness of heart was in him transformed into infinite sweetness, vague poetry, universal charm." It is a relief to read Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick's comment on Renan (in *Life,* December 24, 1945).

> "If Jesus were anything like that one wonders why they crucified him. He stirred some men to loyalty so intense that they willingly died for him; and others to hatred so fierce that they would not rest until they killed him. Some called him a blasphemer, some a sorcerer in league with the devil; some "beside himself," "mad." But apparently they never thought of him in terms of infinite sweetness, vague poetry, universal charm. The money-changers driven from the Temple courts, the hypocrites castigated by his stinging condemnation, faced another kind of man than that."

Rabbi Klausner has also written a very significant thing about him:

> "These two extremes, extreme kindliness of heart and the most violent passion, show in him a character akin to that of the prophet. . . . However this may be, these two contradictory attributes are the sign of great men. Only such a man, mighty in forgiveness and equally mighty in reproof could start so ineffaceable an influence on all who came in contact with him."

Again we find another contrast: Jesus as a man of the world, and Jesus as a mystic and a visionary. He was a very practical man, for all his parables are woven out of the texture of the life about him. He speaks of treasure in the field, of fishermen who will become fishers of men, of the salt that hath lost its savor, of the sparrows that are sold for two farthings, of the house that is built on a hill, of the Good Samaritan who is superior to the priest and the Levite; he goes to a wedding feast and apparently enjoys the wine; he tells parables about the growth of plants, about the seed which must fall into the ground and perish before it can come to full fruition; he compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a grain of mustard seed which grows to enormous proportions. Time and again recurs the phrase: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man" who does so-and-so, and then he mentions some incident taken from every-day life. It is the down-to-earth, direct imagery of his language which appeals to all of us.

But along with being a man of a practical turn of mind, Jesus is a visionary. He has visions of the coming of God's Kingdom; of all evil removed, and justice and love supreme on the earth. "With God all things are possible" he says. He has tremendous faith in God and in himself, and asks men to have a similar faith. He could envision the time when men would return good for evil. This idea of "soul force" which we find in him, and which was also present in Gandhi, represents the visionary side of Jesus. Here again we have the contrast of qualities in him.

Finally, Jesus is remembered for his striking proverbs, "short, sharp, and shrewd" in the words of Klausner: "hitting their mark like pointed darts."

> "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick."
>
> "Let the dead bury their dead."
>
> "Blind leaders of the blind."
>
> "Who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel."
>
> "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven."
>
> "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak."
>
> "Freely have ye received, freely give."

The core of his greatness was this union of diverse and contradictory qualities. To understand this is the only hope of understanding his greatness. Even so, it will keep on eluding us to the end of time, for it is not easy to grasp, until we ourselves are more like him.

Such was the man Jesus; and if anyone wonders how such a man came to be, perhaps one of the best answers is still the one given by the writer of the Gospel of John: "The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit."

LEARNING CHRIST

"Ye have not so learned Christ," says Paul to the Ephesians. It reminds us that much depends on how we learn him, what we see in him, what we permit him to say to us. No personality in history has had to wear so many disguises as Jesus of Nazareth. Even his contemporaries saw him as a wonder-worker and a prophet, John the Baptist, or Jeremiah or Elijah brought to life again. After his death people saw him as the true Messiah who had been rejected but would very soon come again. Paul himself taught the Gentiles to see him as a "hero-god," the center of a new mystery cult. During the great fad of Greek culture people saw him as a Gnostic Eon, the Logos, the Word made flesh and sent to dwell on earth. In the hands of the theologians he became first the Adopted Son of God, then the Only-begotten Son of God, then the Second Person in the Trinity, then "Very God of Very God."

When the Christian Church in Rome secured the ascendancy and was acknowledged as the supreme authority for all Christians, her first concern was to bring order and conformity out of the theological chaos of the time. Her great difficulty was the Holy Bible which St. Jerome had translated into Latin. If the untutored layman should read the Bible for himself, he would surely get the wrong meaning and impression from its words. The Church therefore gathered up and sequestered all the copies of the Bible; and for the next thousand years all that the common people knew about the Bible was what their instructed priests told them.

Accordingly, when we read Paul's words to the Ephesians: "Ye have not so learned Christ," our indignant retort is: "Good Paul, up to four hundred years ago we had not learned Christ at all; we never had the chance. One disguise after another had been offered to us, but the real Jesus of Nazareth was still an unknown figure."

So when Martin Luther translated the Bible into colloquial German, and when John Wycliff and William Tyndale, and Miles Coverdale, and John Rogers and dozens of other scholars translated the Bible into the beautiful English of the sixteenth century, and made it available by having it printed in 1532, it was just like giving the Bible to the common people for the first time. We should not find it hard to understand how anxious they were to read it for themselves. Now, a man —any man who could read his own English— could travel to the nearest cathedral and find a printed Bible translated into English, on a desk, and sit down and pore over its pages by the hour. Like as not, he would find the precious volume chained to the desk; for some of those readers, in their eagerness to understand their Christianity, would forget their Christian scruples and just pick up the Bible and carry it away. Doubtless they honestly meant to bring it back, but we all know how hard it is to return a borrowed book.

In some such way the English-speaking people have formed one of the strongest, most universal, and most profitable habits in all our culture: the habit of reading the Bible for themselves. That habit has lasted four hundred years. Today it seems to be as strong as ever. The Holy Bible is far and away our best seller. We are told that the great presses of the Oxford University Press are running night and day to meet the demand.

Four centuries of this Bible-reading habit have produced certain results. The most important of those results is our discovery of the greatness of Jesus of Nazareth, the undisguised figure as he appears in the Synoptic Gospels. Hungry human minds, for the most part wholly unconditioned by "New Testament Scholarship," have absorbed the simple prima facie meaning of the words, and have formed for themselves a fascinating but tantalizing idea of Jesus as a man possessed of a greatness which defies close definition. Recently our educators have been trying to define this thing we call education. We send our children to school and college to acquire education; but what is education? Is it a mass of knowledge, a string of dates and facts, a collection of skills and techniques? No; that is only information. A boy with a good memory can store his mind with all the information in the world and still be uneducated. Another boy can burden his memory with this assorted information just long enough to pass his final examinations; then forget it all and still be for the rest of his life a truly educated man. What then is this elusive property called education? It is so hard to define that some wag has said, in desperation, that education is that which is left after everything else has been forgotten.

We shall have to resort to some such device to explain what we mean by the Greatness of Jesus. There was something elusive and indefinable about it. He was very much a man of his times, profoundly susceptible to his surroundings. He said and did many things that have nothing more than a relative and temporary value.

But after all these concrete, specific sayings and doings and responses and reactions have been forgotten there is still a something left, something great, a beauty, a fragrance, an influence of nobility and holiness that cannot escape us, but that somehow makes its impression on us to emphasize 'the better angels of our natures" even

ten thousand miles away, and almost two thousand years later. Suppose we make an effort to identify a few of the definite ways in which we become aware of this greatness of Jesus.

First of all, and perhaps most important of all, he makes us feel the reality and power of God. We cannot think of Jesus without thinking at once of God. His own vivid awareness of God, God's purpose, God's will, God's momentary companionship exerts a certain contagion on our minds. Or, as the electrician might say, it sets up a sort of induction in our minds, so that the mystical currents of this awareness of God are awakened in us as they were in him.

Some people will say: I know nothing whatever about God except what I learn from Jesus. Others will say: so long as I have Jesus I do not need God; Jesus is God enough for me. Still others will say: I grant you that a first-hand awareness of God is possible for some men and women who are born with an exceptionally delicate sensitivity. These men and women we call mystics. We look upon them with wonder, and a kind of reverence; and we never dare to question their mystical powers. Now, as it happens, these mystical communications from God have never come to me. They never will, for the simple reason that I am not a mystic. Why then should I waste my time waiting for that flash of spiritual insight which I know I shall never receive? I am satisfied that it has come to some people. I am convinced that it came in full force and clarity to Jesus. All I can do then is to believe what he tells me, take his word for it, and accommodate my life to the accepted fact of God's existence. I can never see God, but I can talk to one who has seen him. Jesus is our mutual friend. God and I can know each other through him.

We know what his answer would be to such comments. To the first one he would say: I am a Jew and a monotheist. Why callest thou me good? There is none good but One, that is God. I am not God. I cannot accept your worship. I cannot have any part in such a sacrilege.

To the other two he would say: No man is lacking in the ability to know God; the trouble is that habits of self-neglect have covered their mystical powers with dust. They lie in a dim corner of the soul covered by cobwebs, disused and forgotten. There is a danger in setting me up as a substitute for God; and there is a danger in merely giving a technical consent to God on the strength of another man's testimony. Such practices only encourage us in this habit of self-neglect. But we are all the time living and working and playing together, all the time influencing each other, helping or hindering each other. By all means let me help you. By all means, come unto me, learn of me, follow my example, observe my easy yoke and light burden, my soul full of rest, the unbroken serenity of all my days and nights. So long as you look to me, not as to the final object of your faith, but as to your tutor and guide in finding for yourselves the final object of your faith, you are free to use me as you please.

The more we think of it the clearer it grows: the personality of Jesus was full of power. It increases as the centuries roll along. The foremost impact of that power upon us is the reminder that man is a spiritual creature, and that his first and most urgent task is to establish a right relationship between his own individual spirit and the Supreme Spirit. That was a new thought at the time of Jesus: the value of the individual soul, every soul. The philosophy of the day was just beginning to turn attention to that phenomenon of individuality. Jesus taught it with a power and a confidence that surprises us even today.

The conventional idea was that Jehovah was God of the Jewish nation. He contemplated his nation as a whole; loved it; was proud of it; guided it; protected it—all as a final unit. Separate men and women must be content with the knowledge that they were fragments of the nation; and that the care which God lavishes on the nation will in time leech down through the porosity of the national fabric until it reaches them and satisfies their personal needs. That is about as near to God as the individual could hope to get. What more could they wish? The poet rhapsodizes over his lady-love:

> I see thee later by the still sea-strand,
> Summer's last poppy smiling in thy hand,
> And sunset's royal mystery, grand and fair,
> Meshed in the glory of thy Titian hair.

Was the poet referring to any single hair? Foolish question. Of course not. He was referring to all the separate hairs taken together, her head of hair. That was the way God looked at the nation. Is not that enough? No, answers Jesus, it is not enough. The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Each separate soul has its individual identity in God's eyes, and its claim to his first-hand attention.

We agree with Jesus. God could not do justice either to the nation or to himself by dealing with the nation as a whole. Nations have no mind, no sense of ego, no self-consciousness. Nations are just collections of several million individual minds. Nations have no soul; they are undifferentiated, inorganic aggregations of several million individual souls. Thought answereth unto thought; it cannot answer to anything else. Soul with soul hath kin; it cannot have kin with anything but soul. They that worship God must worship him in spirit, and in truth.

Little by little the idea had been getting clearer and stronger: if God is to have any intelligent traffic with the nation, that traffic must take place

at the spot where divine spirit can come into contact with earthly spirit. The individual man is the only such spot. The human individual is the only creature through whom God can communicate with his world.

No wonder the later writings of the Old Testament contain such documents as the book of Job—a heartbroken soliloquy on the question: Why has God forsaken me? How have I forfeited his personal love? How can I win it back again? Nor is it any wonder that in this later literature we find Psalms that freely use the first personal pronoun, and emphasize not only the possibility but the importance of a direct personal relationship with God. For example: "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, for his greatness is unsearchable. But however great you are, O God, thou art my God. And however busy you are over the affairs of the nation as a whole, you have got to harken unto the voice of my supplication; you cannot hold thy peace at my tears."

When Jesus appeared upon the scene he found that idea waiting for him. There is such a thing as individuality; God's attention is never satisfied merely to contemplate the national unit. It is forever seeking the individual souls that constitute the nation. Every instinct and intuition in his nature urged him to take up that thought and make it the keynote of all his living and teaching.

God's only point of intelligent contact with his nation is the individual soul. Therefore the first and most important thing for each man is to establish that private, personal, secret, intimate bond between his soul and the divine Over-soul. It is natural for a man to lay up treasure. We all do. But the best treasure he can lay up unto himself is this heavenly treasure of faith and trust and love with God. A man's life consisteth not in earthly possessions—barns filled with plenty, and vats overflowing with new wine. It consists in how rich he is toward God.

The Temple is no substitute. However nice and proper it may be for the nation to worship God in its official ceremonial of morning and evening sacrifice, thou, when thou prayest, forget the Temple, enter into thy closet, shut the door, and pray to thy Father who seeth in secret. Religion is nothing unless it begins and always continues as a private matter between self and God. It is all very decent and seemly to bring thy gift unto the altar. But if thou rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift; first, be reconciled with thy brother. Thy gift will be a vain and sterile offering unless it comes from a heart at peace with God.

Jesus spoke with confidence because he spoke from personal experience. He knew what this bond between his soul and the soul of his Heavenly Father could bring into his life. First, it brought self-respect. He was a part of the wondrous Being of his Creator. The life in him was a fragment of God's life. The powers that he found in himself, self-consciousness, thought and reason, memory and hope, love of beauty, demands of conscience, instinctive hunger and thirst after righteousness, and that unaccountable sense of inner comfort and serenity that flooded his heart when that hunger and thirst was gratified by any righteous choice and conduct of his own, all these mysterious mental and spiritual powers in himself were a collection of God's powers bestowed upon him. How could he help feeling self-respect?

Lesser natures might find self-respect too exacting to be gratified and too uncomfortable to be endured. They might argue that if they did not live in a way to produce self-respect it was because they could not. There was a deficiency in their structure. God had bungled his job when he made them. Of course they were sinners, morally incompetent, totally depraved. It was not their fault; God had made them so. The responsibility for their shameful condition was not theirs but his. What a comfort it has been to a craven humanity to argue that way! If we are sinners you must not blame us, you must blame God.

That craven comfort was impossible for Jesus. His reverence for God was too deep, and his love too strong. God was no bungler, but the Perfect Artisan. Man is his creature. Man has not only the duty but the privilege of knowing himself, and feeling the self-respect which that knowledge can bring. You can be humble as you will, you can sin and repent, you can fail and try again, you can make mistakes and learn their lesson—and with it all you can still respect yourself. You are both morally responsible and morally competent. Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father in Heaven is perfect.

His awareness of God brought Jesus another reward: the sense of Purpose. Somehow Jesus got the idea that his Heavenly Father was a God of purpose. He found that idea partly in his Hebrew tradition, and partly in his own thinking. Human life is not just living—eating, drinking, being as merry as possible; not just being born, and growing up, and begetting children, and fading away, and finally dropping out. There is a meaning to this existence; a destiny for this human life; some far-off, divine event to which the whole creation moves. A few other great minds long before Jesus had the vague idea of human progress toward some adequate result. Isaiah talks about the time to come "when they shall neither hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain, for the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea." Both Plato and Confucius had their visions of a happier human life under some Philosopher King,

or Enlightened Despot. Plato describes it in his Republic.

But we must agree, with a little cynical smile, that human thought as a rule has fallen into the pattern of Micah: What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God! Our first thought is that Micah makes it too simple a matter to meet God's requisitions; but on second thought we realize that Micah would have been glad enough to make the task more substantial if only he could think of anything more positive and constructive that God requires of man. He could find no place in this world-economy for the creature man, no necessary function waiting explicitly for man. For in the thought of his day, man was nothing but a sidewalk engineer with a very high nuisance-potential. The only task facing man was to reduce that nuisance-potential to its lowest possible point.

Our own Calvinism has emphasized Micah's idea. Our Sovereign God does everything himself. Not an acorn drops to the ground except at an output of his direct energy. What can such a God require of us? What is man's place and task in such a world? He has no place, no task, save to behave himself and keep out of the way. Ask the Shorter Catechism: What is the chief end of man? Nothing constructive, merely "to glorify God and enjoy him forever." Ask the question of John Milton, and his answer is still more explicit:

"God doth not need
Either man's work, nor his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest.
They also serve who only stand and wait."

Ask the question of Dr. Samuel Johnson, as Boswell actually did at one time. His answer throws full light on the thought of the time: To keep himself innocently employed.

What an exhilarating prospect! The highest point of righteousness and service accessible to man is to live with common decency and keep out of God's way. Righteousness consisted of nothing except not being unrighteous. And what a lift to the spirit we get when we turn to that man of Galilee! Ask him what is the chief end of man, and we get an instant answer: The chief end of man is to know God's purpose and help him to fulfill it. My Father hath a business in hand. I must be about my Father's business. My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. My meat is to do the will of him that sent me. The harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Why stand ye here all the day idle? Son, go work today in my vineyard. To Jesus life was brimming full of challenge. There was one great overall end in view: God's Kingdom of Heaven on earth. It breaks down into a thousand immediate daily opportunities. Jesus was never at a loss for something to do. His basic philosophy of God's purpose and man's destiny filled his days with more tasks than he could accomplish. There is that air of urgency that we all notice, running straight through the Gospel Story. Time was short. Ye shall not be gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come. Another thing we notice about his busyness: it was not of the body, but of the mind, involving his solicitudes, and hopes, and daily thinking. Wise men tell us that this present age is an aimless and purposeless age. They cannot mean that we are physically aimless, for we are not. We are buzzing about in noble fashion in our daily labor, and in our search for diversion and entertainment. But if they mean that we are aimless in our intellectual life, in our understandings of this rather ominous world-picture, in our foresights and apprehensions and our efforts to master these, as yet, theoretical problems before they erupt in open violence, then it will be hard to deny the charge that this is an aimless age. It is worth our while to turn to that Galilean. Man has long since discovered that there are only two ways in which he can live: he can either think his way through life, or he can fight his way through life.

Up to this moment history reveals a combination of the two methods. Man has done some thinking, all he could, or all he cared to, depending on the shortness of his temper. And when the thinking proved to be of no avail he has of necessity fallen back on the fighting. But now, all of a sudden, he has made a momentous discovery: he does not dare to fight. The race may be to the swift; but the battle is no longer to the strong. Time and chance may guide a single atom bomb to its target, even though it come from the weakest nation in the world. That could be the finishing touch. This means that we are left with only one way to live, the way of Jesus; we must think our way through life, think hard and straight and with justice and consideration to all mankind. Most of all, we must learn to think efficaciously. If we can do it, Jesus may prove himself to be the Saviour of the World in a grim literal sense.

There is one other reward that his awareness of God brought to Jesus. It will suffice just to mention it: happiness. We do our living at the incentive of duty, or compulsion, or fear; he did his living at the incentive of love. The strongest passion of his heart was his love for God. The one thing he most wanted to hear was a divine voice in his secret heart: This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Not even the cross could destroy the radiance of such a moment. We bear our burdens because we must; he bore his burden because he wanted to. It was God's will, and to do God's will was his constant and eager desire. We can say with confidence that he was the happiest

man who ever lived.

The better we know Jesus, the more he has to teach us. A greatness such as his requires a great deal of learning. The end result of it all is that, in its inferences, corollaries, and implications, his life teaches us the loving purposeful reality of God; an honest self-knowledge and self-respect that is possible for every one of us; an objective, a task that gives every life a meaning and an aim, even the humblest one of us; and the power to live this life in a mood of eager co-operation, confidence, serenity, that awakens in us the deepest happiness we can know. Perhaps we never needed that teaching so much as just now.

* * *

Lord, thou art Searcher of Hearts, help us to see what thou dost find in searching our hearts. If we tell ourselves that we are doing our best, show us in mercy that there is something a little better than our best. Teach us to think, and understand, and sympathize, not only with the mind, but in the spirit of that Son of Man who found in thy service the richest manhood and the truest happiness that a man can know. Help us to make him the champion of that better nature in ourselves which we have not yet discovered. Let him be our daily companion, our constant preoccupation, that we may learn his secret, and tread his ever-brightening path, and find his rest unto our souls. *Amen.*

Operation Religious Freedom

PRELIMINARY REPORT

Alexander St.-Ivanyi

Four hundred years ago, in 1557, the Diet of Transylvania, Hungary, passed an act of Toleration and Freedom of Religion which will be remembered in many countries of the world. The Diet was convoked by Queen Isabella who then ruled the country in the name of her son, John Sigismund. The Diet was opened on Whitsunday at Torda and lasted for two weeks. One of the most important subjects on the agenda was the settlement of religious difficulties. Finally the Diet sent the following unanimous resolution to the Queen. (To assure free expression, the Queen, and later her son, King John Sigismund, never attended the debates of the Diet.)

> "Everyone may hold the faith of his choice, with the new rites, or with the old ones; and the followers of the new faith must not harm the followers of the old one."

With full acknowledgment of the splendid work our lamented Dr. Wilbur performed when writing about the history of Unitarianism in Transylvania, we still have to make some corrections regarding his judgment about this Act. Dr. Wilbur says (A History of Unitarianism, vol. 2, page 22), "This decree was simply a practical measure designed to promote peace between Catholics and Lutherans, and did not declare a policy of general toleration."

First: there is nothing in the text of this Act which would limit religious freedom to Catholics and Lutherans only. Second: the Calvinist or Reformed Church was in existence in Transylvania for some years, by that time. Its strongest supporter, the first Hungarian Calvinist statesman, was no less a person than Peter Petrovics, cousin and official guardian of John Sigismund, the only Councillor whom Queen Isabella trusted since the death of her husband seventeen years before. It is inconceivable that this influential and generally respected statesman would have allowed his church not to be included in this Act. We know that the Act was passed unanimously. Surely, Petrivics and other Calvinist members of the Diet would have expressed dissent if left out. Wilbur's argument that "this decree was simply a practical measure designed to promote peace between Catholics and Lutherans, and did not declare a policy of general toleration," is based by him on the fact that "when it was reaffirmed by the Diet of the following year, it in the same breath forbade the rising sect of Sacramentarians." Of course, whenever we deal with parliamentary procedure and law-making it is very difficult, if not impossible, to determine just how strong was the philosophical or ideological motive as related to the unavoidable practical and political considerations. The members of the Diet were statesmen and practical politicians, not philosophers or professors living in ivory towers. Yet they cannot be denied at least some interest in matters of religion, for the age was an age of religious controversy, the majority of the Diet members were Protestants—through choice, not by birth as yet—and if they were willing to risk their lives and estates by becoming Protestant they probably gave enough thought and soulsearching to the problem. In addition, both Queen Isabella and her son, King John Sigismund, were in Poland, in the Court of Isabella's father, King Sigismund, when that country decreed in the previous year: "Every nobleman may hold any faith and any rite in his house as long as it is based on Holy Scripture." They knew, consequently, what such a decree on religious tolerance involved. True, the Polish decree is narrower politically than the Transylvanian one, for it restricts religious freedom to noblemen only, and "in their houses"; but from a religious or philosophical point of view it was unrestricted so long as it was "based on Holy Scripture."

The Transylvanian Act has no restrictions. Had they wanted to confine freedom to Catholics and Lutherans there was no reason why the Act could not have said so. The name "Lutheran" was in use in Hungary since the Diet of Pest in 1523 when the infamous law of "Lutherani comburantur" (Lutherans will be burned), was passed. This Act of 1557 however did not mention Lutherans; it says "the followers of the New Faith." There were many varieties of the new faith. The Reformation was still in a formative period in Hungary at that time, and remained so for quite a while yet, even though the Law against Innovation, 1572, and the sentencing of Francis David to life imprisonment, 1579, tried to stabilize church boundaries.

The Sacramentarians for instance, whom Wilbur mentions, represented one wing of the Reformed Church. They were Zwinglians rather than Calvinists. In a series of public debates Francis David decisively refuted their teachings. Indeed, they disappeared from the religious scene, or rather they were merged with the Reformed Church accepting Calvin's interpretation of the Lord's Supper. True, they should not have been excluded from the benefit of the 1557 Act of Toleration, but politicians are not always logical in their voting. The fact that Petrovics, the first Calvinist statesman of Hungary, was dead by the time the Sacramentarians were excluded from the benefit of tolerance, also may have had something to do with the case.

Notwithstanding the Sacramentarians, the Act of Tolerance of 1557 was a great step forward to secure the freedom of conscience of which Transylvanian Hungarians in general, and Unitarians in particular, are justly proud. Each year, more was added by later Diets to clarify the scope and meaning of freedom of conscience, raising it far above the level of mere tolerance. Finally, the 1568 Diet, also at Torda, codified the most complete "freedom of Conscience" act in Western Civilization, up to the time of the U. S. "Bill of Rights."

Commemorating the Four-hundredth Anniversary of this event, we aim to call attention to the problems involved and solved in this Act of 1557. The importance of the Anniversary was recognized by some World organizations which intend to join in the commemoration. First of all, to demonstrate that the spirit of 1557 is still alive among Hungarians, a Hungarian Interfaith Brotherhood was organized, in which all the historical churches of Hungary are being represented by the highest ranking clerical or lay officer of their respective bodies. Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, Reformed, Lutheran, and Unitarian Protestants, as well as the Jewish religious communities are thus represented.

Furthermore, the three (alternating) presidents of the Hungarian Interfaith Brotherhood, Monsignor Bela Varga, Archdean and Papal Prelate Bela Fabian, LL.D., member of the Jewish Board of Hungary, and the present writer, were received in a special meeting of the National Council for Christians and Jews in their New York auditorium. Deputy Mayor of New York John J. Theobald, Methodist Bishop Frederick B. Newell, Mr. Irving Engel, President of the American Jewish Congress, Dr. Everett R. Clinchy, Justice Francis E. Rivers, and others, greeted the Hungarian Interfaith Brotherhood through the three presidents, emphasizing that this organization was the first among the Iron Curtain national groups that was able to bring about such an organization of all the three major religious persuasions, and that it was therefore admitted into the membership of the World Brotherhood. The commemoration of the 1557 anniversary will have their active support.

Several other organizations, among them the Liberal Democratic Union, world organization of former liberal members of parliament behind the Iron Curtain, expressed interest in making this celebration worthy of the past, and noteworthy for the future.

STAR ISLAND CONFERENCE

Lyman V. Rutledge

The Institute on Religion in an Age of Science is an outgrowth of conferences held at the Isles of Shoals during recent years. The first four of these were conducted under the name of "The Coming Great Church," and were devoted to discussions of elements which all great religions have in common. There was no intention of creating a new church, nor even of forming an alliance among churches, but of promoting better understanding among leaders of all faiths and fellowships. The feeling was strong that the world's present crisis demanded a new and higher interpretation of religion as a personal experience and as an integrating force in society. The greater church is a new spirit which may be shared by all people of all faiths.

The chairman for the first four years (1950-1953) was Professor Robert S. Illingworth of Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. Under his leadership eminent divines and officials from many Christian denominations, also from Jewish and Hindu faiths took part in the daily programs.

Discussions during these years led inevitably to a broadening of interest and a change of name. Too many people were thinking that "The Coming Great Church" was to be a new organization—"just another denomination." Hence at the close of the fourth season it was decided to centre the interest on science as a factor in the interpretation and development of religious experience. At this point Professor Illingworth turned over the chairmanship to Rev. Carl Bihldorff of Brookline, Massachusetts, and Mr. Ralph Burhoe, Executive Director of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The name was changed to "The Conference on Religion in the Age of Science." In 1954 eminent scientists shared the program with theologians and ministers and other church men. The change of name and emphasis gave the conference new vitality, and at the close of the season it was decided to create a permanent organization to be known as the "Institute on Religion in the Age of Science."

The new Institute wrote by-laws which provided for (1) a summer conference annually at the Isles of Shoals, and (2) a continuing program of study and research on the mainland during the winter months. The Rev. Edwin P. Booth, D.D., professor of Historical Theology at Boston University, was made president of the Institute, and Professor Harlow Shapley of Harvard, Chairman of the Advisory Board. Mr. Ralph Burhoe became secretary-treasurer, with general power to direct the affairs of the new Institute.

Under this leadership the conference at the Isles of Shoals has grown to remarkable proportions. The season just closed was described with characteristic enthusiasm as "the best in every way in the long history of the Shoals." The hotel was filled to capacity and those who attended found themselves "caught up in a new spirit." The Rockefeller Foundation had made a grant of $2,000 to provide scholarships for theological students and young ministers. The doors of a bright future seemed to be opening.

The high point of inspiration at each conference from the beginning has been the Morning Chapel talks by Professor Booth. He has had the power above all others to interpret both religion and science with compelling force. Some of these talks have been published in the two books, "The Greater Church," (Beacon Press, 1951) and "Religion in the Age of Science, A Tract for the Times," 1954. Other books will follow in due season.

Many addresses by other distinguished speakers on the program have been published in various magazines and periodicals, notably in the *Christian Register* for May, 1956, *Technology Review*, April, 1956, *Science*, October 1, 1954.

The character and strength of the Institute are best indicated by the list of names now in its membership. The list includes:

Swami Akhilananda, Vedanta Center, Boston.
Rev. Carl Bihldorff, Minister, First Parish, Brookline.
Rev. Dr. Edwin Prince Booth, Prof. Historical Theol., B. U., Boston.
Dr. Marion J. Bradshaw, Prof. Philos., Bangor Theol. Sem., Bangor, Me.
Dr. Sanborn C. Brown, Assoc. Prof. Physics, M.I.T., Cambridge.
Mr. Ralph W. Burhoe, Exec. Amer. Acad. Arts and Science, Cambridge.
Dr. Karl W. Deutsch, Prof. History, M.I.T., Cambridge.
Dr. Alfred E. Emerson, Prof. Zoology, Univ. of Chicago, Ill.
Dr. Sophia L. Fahs, Council Liberal Churches, N. Y.
Dr. Philipp Frank, Pres. Inst. Unity of Sci., M.I.T., Cambridge.
Dr. Erwin R. Goodenough, Prof. History of Religion, Yale Univ., New Haven, Conn.
Rev. Dr. Dana McL. Greeley, Arlington Church, Boston.
Dr. Clark W. Heath, Prof. Hygiene, Tufts Univ., Medford.
Dr. Gerald Holton, Assoc. Prof. Physics, Harvard, Cambridge.
Dr. Roy G. Hoskins, Office of Naval Research, Boston.
Dr. A. G. Huntsman, Prof. Zoology, Univ. of Toronto, Toronto, Ont.
Dr. Edwin C. Kemble, Prof. Physics, Harvard, Cambridge.
Rev. Dr. John Lavely, Prof. Philosophy, B. U., Boston.
Dr. Henry Margenau, Prof. Physics, Yale Univ., New Haven, Conn.
Dr. Robert H. Maybury, Asst. Prof. Chemistry, Univ. Redlands, Redlands, Calif.
Dr. M. F. Ashley Montagu, Anthropologist, Princeton, N. J.
Dr. H. A. Murray, Prof. Psychology, Harvard, Cambridge.
Dr. H. B. Phillips, Prof. Math., Emer., M.I.T., Cambridge.
Dr. William H. Pinson, Jr., Geology, M.I.T., Cambridge.
Dr. Philip Rieff, Asst. Prof. Sociology, Brandeis Univ., Waltham.
Rev. Lyman V. Rutledge, Minister, Community Church, Dublin, N. H.
Dr. Paul E. Sabine, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Dr. Harlow Shapley, Prof. Astronomy, Emer., Harvard.
Dr. James Houston Shrader, Waterville, Vt.
Dr. B. F. Skinner, Prof. Psychology, Harvard, Cambridge.
Dr. Robert Ulrich, Prof. Education, Harvard, Cambridge.
Dr. George Wald, Prof. Biology, Harvard, Cambridge.
Dr. Henry Nelson Wieman, Prof. Philosophy Religion, Emer., Univ. Chicago, Ill.

The general purpose of the Institute is to discover ways in which science and religion can work together to improve the lot of man. The

first step in discussion was to promote common understanding between men of science and men of religion. This meant a careful study of definitions. What after all do we mean by science, religion, reality, life, progress and similar terms? Then follows more specific discussion of life and experience as examined by science and interpreted by religion. The expected outcome is richer life.

The story would not be complete without mention of the program for future development now in formation. It will include briefly, (1) The annual conference at the Isles of Shoals, (2) Bimonthly meetings through the winter, (3) Publication of articles by members of the Institute, (4) A quarterly magazine, (5) Development of local discussion groups, particularly in colleges and churches, (6) Traveling lectureships. The work involved is prodigious!

Perhaps it is well at this time to mention the hidden hope of those who organized the first "Coming Great Church" conference seven years ago; namely, that its programs should expand step by step from religion as a universal factor to religion and science, then religion and education, religion and industry, religion and the arts, religion and government; each of these to be considered separately until their common ground is well established.

L. V. R.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir:

Welcome to the Readers' correspondence plan announced in your May, 1956, issue. In the same issue the anonymous writer of the article on the Gospel of John says that that Gospel attempts to "hellenize" Christianity.

Asking for the same privilege of anonymity, and to insure that your proposed correspondence page will not be empty, I write to say that I would appreciate an article taking into account the new evidence provided by the Qumran Wady manuscripts to support the view, which has long seemed to me supported by the weightiest scholarship, that the Gospel of John is thoroughly Jewish, and that we do not have to look to Gnosticism or beyond Palestinian Judaism for its modes of thought and expression.

A Reader

Dear Sir:

Thank you for the paper on the Gospel of John. The author's arguments are convincing. In reading John after reading his paper I could read into it all he had said; but I was deeply grateful that I had known and loved the Fourth Gospel for so long without knowing any of the reasons why I should *not* love it. How should I have got along all these years without "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid"; "This is my commandment, that ye love one another"? And again from the prayer in the seventeenth chapter, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." These words were surely not written by a Gnostic ghost-writer, but by one who knew Jesus so intimately and was so in harmony with his thought that he had to say, over and over again, what Jesus had said often and had constantly felt.

As for the troublesome first chapter, if one could only be content to keep the word "logos" instead of trying to translate it, there would be no difficulty. We seem to have no English equivalent for the word as it is used in this context. Obviously "word" makes no sense. But if we can think of that something which unites us all to God, which makes us *all Divine,* then we have the foundation for Channing's concept of the *Divinity of Man,* in which I join heart and soul.

A Reader

Note: The Editors are gratified by this auspicious beginning of the new feature, "Letters to the Editor," and hope that it will serve a good purpose in the days to come. The anonymous writer of the article in question: "The Gospel of John" in the issue of May, 1956, makes the following statement:

"Thank you for letting me read the two excellent letters, each of which makes its point, strong and clear and valid. If you think the matter deserves more of your limited space, I will gladly use a page or two of some future issue for my reply, which will be not exactly in rebuttal but in extenuation. After all, the Gospel of John is a matter of taste and, as the Romans put it: *De gustibus non est disputandum.*"